

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
December 4, 2006
(Approved January 8, 2007)

Vice Chair Richard Nass called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 1:05 pm in Florian Hall, Maine Department of Public Safety Building, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta. Members present included Representative Patricia Blanchette, Jay Bradshaw, Representative Richard Brown, Stephan Bunker, Chief John Dean, Chief Kenneth Desmond, Chief Darrel Fournier, Gerry Gay, Robert Gardner (for Charles Jacobs), Geoffrey Maker, Alex McPhedran, Senator Richard Nass, Bruce Hensler (for David Niklaus), Harty Norris, Vicki Schmidt, Charles Soltan, David Wacker, Leslie Wiles (for Bill Williams) and Susan Pinette (staff). Members excused were Senator Bruce Bryant, Chief Jeffrey Cammack, Representative Robert Duplessie, Ronald Green and Edward Johnston. Representative Peter Rines, D-Wiscasset, attended as guest of the Fire Commission.

A motion by Darrel Fournier, seconded by Alex McPhedran, to accept the November meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

The Spring Conference Committee reports plans are moving ahead for the 2007 conference. Committee members have agreed to offer the following seven classes at the conference:

1. Volunteer fire insurance on safe highway operations
2. Residential sprinklers
3. Recruitment and retention (volunteer FFs and EMS)
4. Flu pandemic and preparations
5. Cyanide poisoning (Providence RI)
6. Importance of ventilation (NYFD)
7. Vehicle extrication (newer vehicles)

Classes will be offered to conference attendees on a rotating basis to allow individuals to attend multiple classes. The committee expects to finalize the conference brochure by the first of January. The committee notes that four vendors to date are participating and asked Fire Commission members for assistance in contacting additional vendors. Vendors offer attendees opportunities to view new equipment and apparatus in addition to helping defray the conference costs. Harty Norris agreed to take on this task.

(Please note that since the Fire Commission met in December, the place and dates of the Spring Conference have changed. The 2007 Spring Conference will now be in Bangor on March 12th and 13th (Monday and Tuesday).

The Training Facilities Committee reports the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has agreed to assist the Fire Commission with the next steps in locating a state training facility at the Brunswick Naval Air Station (BNAS) after it closes. In November 2006, the Fire Commission sent a letter to the Brunswick Land Redevelopment Authority (BLRA) indicating the Fire Commission's interest in locating a state training facility at BNAS. The Fire Commission will be required to submit a formal proposal to BLRA. Funds to hire a person to write the proposal will be paid by MEMA. Fire Commission members also discussed the need to keep the Congressional delegation, as well as state and local representatives, apprised of the Fire Commission efforts. Members also discussed the present membership of the Training Facilities Committee and the need to expand the committee to include representatives from EMS. Initially, at the request of the Fire Commission, ten Maine Fire Chiefs formed the Training Facilities Committee and they presented their findings in the Task Force Report to the Fire Commission in May 2006. Several minor revisions have been made to the initial report. The original members agreed to remain together to facilitate the BNAS proposal.

A motion by David Wacker, seconded by Pat Blanchette, to include a Maine Emergency Medical Services representative on the Training Facilities Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

The Best Practices Committee continues to remind members to forward nominees for the 2006 Best Practice Awards to the committee. Nomination forms are available on the Fire Commission's web site.

The Residential Sprinkler/Truss Construction Committee has combined their efforts to educate the public. The State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) plans to address the residential sprinkler issue in stages with hopes it becomes accepted technology like fire alarms. Fire Commission members agreed education is important and also discussed resubmitting the truss construction legislation. Initially, there was a compromise on the proposed legislation between the sponsor and industry. The bill failed in committee when some felt it would pose a mandate on municipalities. Fire Commission members expressed a willingness to resubmit the legislation in 2007. Representative Blanchette agreed to be the prime sponsor.

A motion by Patricia Blanchette, seconded by Dick Brown, that the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission resubmits the Truss Construction bill in 2007. The motion passed unanimously.

The Maine Fire Service/EMS Day at the State House is scheduled for Thursday, January 18th in the Hall of Flags (second floor) from 9am – 1pm. Plans include displays on the second and third floors, honor guards and prayers by the local Fire Chaplain during the morning session of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. A refundable reservation fee of \$100 is required by the Clerk of the House.

A motion by Darrel Fournier, seconded by Dick Brown, to authorize staff to send \$100 to the Clerk of the House of Representatives to reserve the Hall of Flags on Thursday, January 18th. The motion passed unanimously.

The Fire Commission also decided to offer light refreshments and it was suggested staff contact both caterers at the State House to discuss menu options.

A motion by Dick Brown, seconded by Pat Blanchette, authorizing staff to contact the Capitol Connection (located on the first floor of the State House) and spend up to \$400 on refreshments for Maine Fire Service Day at the State House. The motion passed unanimously.

(Please note that following the December Fire Commission meeting, staff was informed that the Maine Legislature scheduled their Southern and Western Maine Development Economic Tour from Wednesday, January 17th through Friday, January 19th. Therefore, the Fire Commission has rescheduled Maine Fire Service/EMS Day at the State House to Monday, January 22nd. Although this is not a session day (the next open session day is June!), it was decided to go with the earlier date.)

Bylaws Change

In accordance with the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission bylaws (revised February 2006), Article VII- Amendment of Bylaws – Fire Commission members discussed amending the bylaws to include the Code of Conduct and Ethics, which was presented at the November meeting.

A motion by Dick Brown, seconded by Ken Desmond, to amend Article II- Membership, Section 3- Conflict of Interest of the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission's bylaws by adding the Code of Ethics and Conduct. The motion passed unanimously (18 members voted in the affirmative, none in the negative, none abstaining).

Old Business

Fire Commission members discussed a variety of issues that the Fire Commission might support in the 2007 Legislative session. Members agreed earlier to resubmit legislation on marking buildings using truss construction stating the need to work with MMA and local authorities about local options and local control issues. Citing the success of the City of Bangor's ordinance on truss construction, members reiterated the importance of education to gain the acceptance of any legislation. Members stressed the importance of educational outreach to dispel many of the myths and to take advantage of opportunities to educate state and local officials and the public of the benefits of residential sprinklers. Many members wanted the Fire Commission to submit legislation requiring residential sprinklers in 2007. Others suggested a more restrained and slower approach. All members agreed that the level of awareness needed to be raised. Members discussed a variety of options that would bring the issue before the legislature. One suggestion would submit a legislative resolve that would direct the Fire Commission to study the residential sprinkler issue and make suggestions regarding potential legislation. This would give all parties an opportunity to express their concerns and correct many of the misconceptions regarding residential sprinklers. Some members suggested offering tax credits for installing residential sprinklers.

A motion by Pat Blanchette, seconded by Dick Brown, that the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission prepare a resolve to be submitted in the 123rd Legislature directing the Fire Commission to study and develop a plan to require sprinklers in new residences. The motion passed unanimously.

Fire Commission members also agreed to submit and support legislation in 2007 on recruitment and retention and length of service award programs (LOSAPs) and fire-safe cigarettes. Representative Peter Rines of Wiscasset is sponsoring legislation in 2007 on low ignition propensity cigarettes, also referred to as fire-safe cigarettes. (As of this date, the bill has not been printed)

A motion by Charlie Soltan, seconded by Ken Desmond, to support Representative Peter Rines's bill on fire-safe cigarettes. The motion passed with one member opposed (Rep. Blanchette).

New Business

The membership of the Fire Commission includes five members of the Maine Legislature- two members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate and three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Presiding Officers will appoint five

new legislative members to the Fire Commission in January 2007. Due to term limits, Representative Bob Duplessie was unable to run for re-election and Representative Dick Brown chose not to run for another term, therefore both members were ineligible to further serve on the Fire Commission. The Fire Commission wants to recognize both Representative Duplessie and Representative Brown for their service on the Fire Commission.

A motion by Gerry Gay, seconded by Richard Nass, that the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission send a letter to Representative Bob Duplessie and Representative Dick Brown thanking them for their service on the Fire Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

Members inquired about the status of L.D. 1021 ***“An Act To Implement Task Force Recommendations Relating to Parity and Portability of Benefits for Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters”*** which was passed by the 122nd Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2006. Legislators are waiting for the results of an actuarial report. Members also learned the sign-up date has been extended through the end of December 2006 and forms are available on-line.

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Secretary Geoffrey Maker adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Pinette

Meeting Schedule and Dates of Interest

<u>Monday, January 8th</u>	FIRE CAUCUS	State House	12Noon
<u>Monday, January 8th</u>	MEETING	State House	1:00pm
<u>Monday, January 22nd</u>	Fire Service Day	State House	9am-1pm
<u>Monday, February 5th</u>	FIRE CAUCUS	State House	12Noon
<u>Monday, February 5th</u>	MEETING	State House	1:00pm
<u>Monday, March 5th</u>	FIRE CAUCUS	State House	12Noon
<u>Monday, March 5th</u>	MEETING	State House	1:00pm
<u>Monday, March 12th</u>	Spring Conference	BCC **	All Day
<u>Monday, March 12th</u>	Legislative Reception	BCC **	4pm-7pm
<u>Tuesday, March 13th</u>	Spring Conference	BCC **	All Day
<u>Monday, April 2nd</u>	FIRE CAUCUS	State House	12Noon
<u>Monday, April 2nd</u>	MEETING ++	State House	1:00pm
<u>Monday, May 7th</u>	FIRE CAUCUS	State House	12Noon
<u>Monday, May 7th</u>	MEETING	State House	1:00pm

++ Election of Fire Commission Officers

** Bangor Civic Center